



Monday 29th August 2022

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Summer over and September upon us. With drought on the east, we are trekking this week up to the north west to do some farm collections: ruby chard, golden beetroot, tomatoes and lettuces from several farms in Lancashire. The haulage network is almost dysfunctional these days. Hauliers will only deliver if you are on one of the fruit and vegetable wholesale markets. So short of drivers, they refuse to go even a few minutes off the route. It's easier to get a pallet delivered to us from Verona than from Woodbridge.

The ruby chard is from Royal Oak farm: delicious sautéed with olive oil, garlic, and crushed red pepper flakes. Simply sauté sliced onions with chopped chard stems until tender, add garlic and pepper flakes, then add the chopped leaves and a pinch of salt to the pan. Cover for a few minutes to allow the leaves to wilt, then uncover and allow any liquid to cook off. Finish with a squeeze of lemon or splash of vinegar. Great as a side dish, or it can be added to pasta. For more flamboyance, you could add sautéed apples, toasted pine nuts and raisins: Catalan-style.

Here are a few other tasty recipes you could try this week:

Ruby Chard and Gruyere Tart

500g all-butter shortcrust pastry

250g ruby chard, leaves and stalks separated

142ml organic double cream

3 medium onions, finely sliced

4 Hen Nation eggs

100g Gruyère cheese, grated

Heat the oven to 190C / Gas 5. Roll out the pastry to a £1-coin thickness and line a 23cm, loose-based tart tin. Line with a circle of baking paper and fill with baking beans. Cook for 10 minutes then take out the beans and paper and cook for another 10 minutes. Turn the oven down to 180C / Gas 4. Heat a knob of butter in a pan and cook the onions until completely softened. Add the Swiss chard stalks first and cook for 3 minutes then add the leaves and keep cooking until tender. Season and cool. Mix together the eggs, cream and cheese and season well. Spread the chard and onion over the base of the tart and pour the egg mix over. Cook for 20-30 minutes until the filling is just set.

Golden Beetroot Risotto

40g organic butter or creamy margarine

1 clove garlic, grated

175g arborio risotto rice

500ml hot vegetable stock

75g crumbled Wensleydale cheese (or non-dairy cheese)

chopped chives

½ onion, finely chopped

1 tbsp chopped fresh sage

75ml dry white wine

175g golden beetroot, coarsely grated

Set the oven to 200C / Gas 6. Melt 30g of the butter / margarine in a small oven proof pot that has a lid over a medium heat. Add onion and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring frequently, for 7 minutes until starting to soften. Add the grated garlic and sage and cook for a further 2 minutes. Add the rice and cook for 2 more minutes, stirring regularly to avoid it sticking. Add the wine and allow it to reduce in the pan until nearly dry, continuing to stir. Add the grated beetroot and stir through to ensure all the ingredients are evenly distributed. Add the stock, and season generously. Allow the risotto to come to simmering point, stir and then put in the oven with the lid on, for 20 mins with a good stir halfway through. After 20 minutes, remove the pot from the oven. Stir well, adding the remaining 10g of butter /margarine, the crumbled cheese, the lemon zest and juice and a grind of black pepper. Serve garnished with chopped fresh chives.

Roasted Golden Beetroot

400g golden beetroot

1 tsp dried Rosemary

garlic cloves

1 tbsp olive oil

Preheat your oven to 200°C / Gas 6. Peel the beetroot and cut into small chunks. Finely chop the garlic and mix together with the olive oil, rosemary and salt and pepper. Toss the beetroot chunks into the olive oil garlic-herb mixture and ensure they are well coated. Spread the beetroot evenly across a baking tray and place into the oven for 35-40 minutes. Move the beetroot about 1-2 times during roasting to ensure they cook evenly.

I've been pondering how to reduce my energy consumption. I'm sure we all have. With my downstairs being open plan and glassy, I might have to live in my bedroom. These energy prices are unfathomable, they will wipe people out: their earnings; their pensions: their savings; their futures. As for small businesses who don't even have one of these phantom caps – it will be ruinous. Soaring inflation, interest rates, mortgage repayments etc. There can't be many of us who aren't extremely concerned about what's coming. In the fruit and veg growing world everyone is reliant on big cold stores to chill and keep their produce after harvest. Yet another factor on top of everything else that will feed into produce prices.

In this state of economic crisis, all other issues are kicked down the road – the planet on fire, oceans filling with plastic, animal welfare. Animals – farm animals, wild animals - always at the bottom of the list of priorities. They're just animals.

This whole evolution of the human species thing just isn't working. These beings are too flawed - too selfish, too greedy, too aggressive and too stupid (present company excepted of course).Who thought it could be a good idea, and who is responsible ? It should have all stopped 10 million years ago. We should still be swinging about in the forest and picking nits out of each other's fur. What a beautiful world it would be without us, it would be paradise. We have truly screwed it up.

Only a week to go now before 'pinhead brain' becomes our new Prime Minister and we get to see what she's really made of. It's like a root-filling – just get on with it. And let's see your 'brilliant' new Cabinet.

I hope you have a good week.

Kind wishes, Isobel